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THE IMPACT OF RUSSIAN CULTURE ON SOVIET COMMUNISM

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517 They believe that politics is the business of the government, the business of the Central Committee, and as for the writers that their business is not to interest themselves in politics. They believe that if a man wrote well, artistically, and beautifully, one should let it go, in spite of the rotten passages which disorientate our youth and poison it. We demand that our comrades, both the supervisors of literature and the writers themselves must be guided by something without which the Soviet regime cannot exist, and that is politics. Lenin wrote: "Literature must become Party-minded . . . Against bourgeois literary careerism and individualism . . . socialist proletariat must put forward the principle of party literature . . ." Comrade Stalin described our literati as the engineers of human souls. It is necessary therefore that our literature, our literary magazines, . . . should help the Party and the people to educate the youth in the spirit of supreme devotion to the Soviet regime . . .¹⁶

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626 Special attention is paid in this respect to dramatic art because of its popularity and effect. It is stated therefore that "a playwright must be a politician" and that the producer and actor must be "politicians" of the same stature. Appointment of a group of actors for a Soviet play "is a political question for the producer . . . and how the hero must be played in a Soviet play is a political question for the actor."¹⁷ In the same manner in painting, sculpture and music the Party demands "Soviet realism" which means that the artists and the musicians must have recourse to "topical themes and images of contemporary Soviet reality" and must discard "formalistic trickery and subjectivist insularity."¹⁸

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186 Accordingly any alien, especially Western, influence on Soviet thinking must be completely eliminated. Western philosophy of liberalism and free individual expression could undermine Bolshevik endeavors to create a completely regimented and submissive "new man." Hence a crusade against "cosmopolitanism, objectivism and other manifestations of bourgeois ideology"¹⁹ has been initiated together with the severance of all closer contacts of Soviet intellectuals with the Western world.²⁰

• 656 Such policies of complete subordination of one's thoughts, feelings and behavior to the needs of the Party demand not only strict censorship of all published matter²¹ but dictate even the use of statistics to suit the objectives of the ruling class. A ruling

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group which claims perfection and monopoly on Truth cannot afford to lay itself open to any fundamental criticism of its accomplishments. Figures are therefore manipulated so as to achieve the desired effect.²² "In the land of the Soviets statistics have become a weapon for Socialism and Communism," the Bolsheviks say.

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Shaping of the "new man" must begin early in his childhood. To answer to this need, the schools have become in the Soviet system one of the fundamental instruments of character molding in the hands of the ruling faction. Special measures must be applied by educators to fashion character since "the life itself would not do it," the Bolsheviks say. The schools in the Soviet society have therefore a twofold objective. The first is to develop in each and every child psychological traits which are considered most desirable from the point of view of the perpetuation of the Soviet system and Bolshevik rule. The other is to develop needed skills and to train specialists which are of fundamental importance in a system of total control, such as experts in conspiracy, political organization and agitation, in overseeing, in vigilance and violence.

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In a thoroughly regimented society training in unconditional obedience and in identification with and dependence upon the leader is of paramount importance. Such personality traits, already rooted in the Russian social and political structure, are being reinforced by the system of training in the Soviet schools whose pedagogical principles in their essentials do not differ from the precepts of the Domostroy. "From early years we must educate children so that a state of discipline will remain as their permanent possession," says a textbook on Soviet pedagogy.²³ "This discipline must be *firm*, that is, unquestioned obedience and submission to the leader, the teacher, or the organizer . . . " Submission to the will of the leader "is a necessary and essential mark of discipline."²⁴

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According to these pedagogical ideas the teacher does not coax pupils, he *demand*s obedience.²⁵ The teacher is expected to be "authoritative and strict." Whenever necessary he must give

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594 chooses to consider that the interests of the children have not
 672 been safeguarded.⁵ In such cases parental rights might be lost
 for up to five years.⁶ According to the Soviet educational philosophy it is expected that the parents will *rear* the children, but that the public organizations under the Party's supervision will instruct and supervise parents in the ways of *Communist upbringing* of children.⁷

594 The Party considers it to be its duty to arouse antagonism of
 578 children against parents when such action is necessary in the
 interest of the survival of the Soviet regime. As mentioned
 earlier, planned rift between fathers and sons was, for instance,
 employed to speed up the process of collectivization. Commissar
 of Agriculture Jakovlev, speaking before a Party congress on the
 struggle against the kulaks, stated that "In a number of cases,
 the children of the kulaks are made to revolt against their
 parents, and thus the kulak families are divided and the kulaks
 still more isolated." The Party has also been known to take
 advantage of family conflicts to encourage the children to spy
 on their parents and to denounce them to the political police:

[626] Russian parents had to be very careful of what they said in the presence of their own children, and even of how they disciplined their children. One boy, Pavlik Morosov, was built up as a hero among youth because he had denounced his father who was organizing resistance against the kolhoz. Great propaganda was made about this boy. A book was written about him. Actually he became a hero to most children.⁸

[661] In times of political "purges" there were frequent notices in the Soviet papers in which the children of the parents who were politically persecuted publicly renounced their parents.⁹ That
 [672] was the only way they could escape the vengeance of a regime which had revived the tradition of family hostages and used it as an instrument of political conformity.

• 656 The Bolsheviks consider that since "one's way of life is a social
 837 matter . . . a matter of national policy,"¹⁰ the Party has the
 594 right to interfere even in pre-marital and extra-marital sex relations, as well as in the relations between the spouses. "Young Communist organizations cannot remain neutral when the con-

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duct of its members in love and family life run counter to the ethics of Soviet Man."¹¹ The fundamental motivation behind this interference in love and sex life is political control. "Moral corruption brings political corruption,"¹² the Bolsheviks say. It is in accordance with such a line of thought that it is considered to be the duty of one to inform on his or her own spouse. Such behavior is especially expected of a Party member. Therefore "A prudent Russian today hesitates to confide in even his wife too fully."¹³

At the same time while the Soviet family laws and Soviet philosophy and practices tend to favor Party and government supervision of family relations and in some cases sharpen family conflicts, they also endeavor to enforce family discipline over children, and to strengthen the sense of mutual responsibility among family members. The Bolsheviks, however, do not encourage development of the sense of kinship loyalty which might go counter to the interests of the state. The Soviet family laws have broadened the concept of family to all ascending and descending lines and to brothers and sisters. In case any one of these relatives is needy or incapacitated, the others have the obligation of support.¹⁴ Emphasis on family responsibility is manifested also in the provision of the law of 1926 which, contrary to the Russian traditions, abolished the principle of separate property of the spouses.¹⁵

In accordance with new policy, factual or non-registered marriage which earlier enjoyed state protection was denied that privilege and a decree in 1944 ruled that "only registered marriage confers the rights and obligations of spouses."¹⁶ A decree of the same year ruled that divorce is allowed only in case the wish of one or even both parties who seek divorce coincides with the "government's recognition of necessity to dissolve marriage."¹⁷ Moreover in order to make divorce proceeding prohibitive and marriage practically indissoluble, a long judicial procedure was established. In the course of this long procedure the parties must clarify the motives for divorce and bring witnesses. Also high divorce fees were introduced. And to facilitate state interference, no grounds for divorce were stated or specified in the decree.

However, the procedural instructions concerning this decree

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